United Nations A/56/412

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 September 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 20 (b)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance to the Republic of the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General*

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1	2
II.	Current humanitarian situation in the Sudan	2–6	2
III.	Emergency humanitarian operations, including Operation Lifeline Sudan	7–70	2
IV.	Action taken by Member States	71–73	12
V.	Concluding observations	74–78	12

* The delay in the submission of the report is due to developments in the situation in the Republic of the Sudan.

01-55480 (E) 181001

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 54/96 J of 22 December 1999, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to mobilize and coordinate resources and support for Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the emergency situation in the affected areas and the recovery, rehabilitation and development of the Sudan. It contains a review of the current situation in the Sudan, detailing humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners during the period from 15 July 1999 to 15 July 2001.

II. Current humanitarian situation in the Sudan

2. Humanitarian assistance to the Sudan continues to be implemented against the backdrop of the long-standing civil war between the Government of the Sudan and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Liberation Army (SPLM/A) and other movements. SPLM/A control extensive areas of southern Sudan across the East and West Equatoria, Lakes, Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal regions.

3. Ongoing armed conflict between the military forces of the parties to the conflict and their allied militias, both in the south and in the so-called transitional zone between the northern and southern parts of the country, continues to threaten already fragile coping mechanisms among communities. The conflict continues to create widespread displacement of civilian populations and to destroy crops and infrastructure. Agricultural and pastoral activities among farming communities, including the all-important planting and harvesting cycles, are continually disrupted.

4. Military activities over recent months, particularly in the Nuba Mountains and in western Bahr al-Ghazal, have displaced tens of thousands of civilians. Endemic conflict in the Unity State/western Upper Nile localities in the southern part of the country is also giving rise to displacement on a considerable scale. The activities of various semi-autonomous militia groups allied to one side or the other, or sometimes acting independently, add to the instability and chaos.

5. The humanitarian situation for the war-affected and the displaced is compounded by natural disasters in many parts of the country. The Darfur and Kordofan regions of western Sudan, Red Sea Hills in the east, Bahr al-Ghazal in the south-west and East Equatoria in the southern part of the country have suffered and continue to suffer from the effects of prolonged drought and occasional floods. Inevitably, the most vulnerable communities bear the brunt of these effects, which also lead to displacement as conditions worsen in home localities. The potential for conflict both among and between communities intensifies as they compete for increasingly scarce resources of food and water and for employment opportunities.

6. In such widespread circumstances of disruption to livelihoods and displacement, mostly as a result of war and drought, malnutrition among the very young and the elderly remains a source of constant concern. Beneficiary communities continue to rely heavily for survival on emergency food and other relief assistance in health, water and environmental sanitation, and education. For the reporting period of the last two years, the overall number of beneficiaries has remained at around three million.

III. Emergency humanitarian operations, including Operation Lifeline Sudan

A. General observations

7. Humanitarian operations in the Sudan during the reporting period continued to pursue a dual objective of life-saving and life-sustaining activities. For the United Nations, this objective was reflected and outlined in the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals for 2000 and 2001.

8. For the war-affected areas in the southern part of the country, the principal umbrella and vehicle for the implementation of humanitarian relief activities continues to be the OLS access agreements, endorsed by the Government of the Sudan, SPLM/A and the United Nations. The Government and SPLM/A continue to reaffirm their support for OLS and the humanitarian activities which are carried out under its auspices. In April 2001, the Government formally

advised the United Nations that, in a change to the practice which had evolved over the years of the OLS humanitarian programme, all international humanitarian workers operating in the rebel-controlled areas of southern Sudan under the umbrella of OLS should have entry visas for the Sudan.

9. The current strategic approach of the United Nations is structured around three themes which recognize the imperative of addressing the most immediate needs, the enduring consequences and, where possible, the root causes of armed conflict. These themes are as follows:

(i) Emergency preparedness and emergency response, involving preparation and response to acute emergencies and support for community preparedness;

(ii) Internal displacement, focusing on the needs of displaced and host populations, including the long-term displaced;

(iii) Peace-building, aiming at the facilitation of community-based rehabilitation of services and peace-building efforts.

10. The coordination of humanitarian affairs by the United Nations in the Sudan rests with the Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator (formerly the Coordinator for Emergency and Relief Operations), based in Khartoum. This office deals with strategic coordination and humanitarian access issues and promotes regular meetings with and among counterparts (e.g. the Government of the Sudan and SPLM/A), donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others. The Humanitarian Coordinator has two deputies. The Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator (south), based in Nairobi, is responsible for humanitarian operations in rebel-held areas which come under negotiated access agreements and is also the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Chief of Operations for southern Sudan. The Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator (north), based in Khartoum, is also the World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director for the Sudan.

11. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the Sudan provides secretariat and other support services both in Khartoum and Nairobi for the Humanitarian Coordinator and his two deputies. In addition, OCHA-Sudan functions as the secretariat for the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan and for the tripartite Technical Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (TCHA), comprising the Government of the Sudan, SPLM/A and the United Nations.

12. A network of OCHA field coordination offices in key locations throughout the Sudan, staffed by national field officers, completes the core support structure for overall coordination of the humanitarian operation. The terms of reference for these field officers include assistance with coordination for humanitarian actors at the field level, assistance with the organization and servicing of local meetings, the identification of gaps in humanitarian assistance, early warning and monitoring of impending disasters, protection and other responsibilities in respect of vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons, and the achievement of humanitarian access.

13. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan visited the country four times during the reporting period, on average every six months. The broad purpose of these visits was to discuss with the Government (in Khartoum) and SPLM/A (in Nairobi) matters of mutual concern in relation to the humanitarian assistance programme for the Sudan, including OLS. The Special Envoy was able to address at the highest levels such issues as humanitarian ceasefires and the violations thereof, armed attacks on civilians and on humanitarian personnel, issues of humanitarian access and the implementation of commitments arising from the meetings of TCHA.

14. The Special Envoy also acts as the chairman of TCHA, which met twice in Geneva in the course of the reporting period, December 1999 and November 2000. The principal objective of the most recent Geneva meeting was to review the implementation of the agreements and protocols arising from the previous three meetings, with particular reference to the Security and Beneficiary Protocols. A related objective was to reactivate efforts to achieve cross-line movement of humanitarian services and supplies by river, road and rail.

15. Between meetings of TCHA, the United Nations assumes the responsibility of leading efforts to ensure compliance with agreements reached at the meetings. A particular initiative in this respect during 2000 was the assembly in (one) pocket booklet form of the three key TCHA agreements, namely the Security and

Beneficiary Protocols and the Minimal Operational Standards for Rail Corridors and Cross-line Road Corridors. The booklet is in both English and Arabic and has been widely disseminated within the humanitarian community, as well as to the Government, SPLM and related organizations.

B. Security situation affecting humanitarian relief efforts

16. A series of unilateral humanitarian ceasefires, which were put in place concurrently by the Government and SPLM/A in July 1998 in the wake of the Bahr al-Ghazal humanitarian crisis of that year and renewed every three months after consultations with the United Nations, were allowed to lapse in July 2000 despite United Nations pressure on both parties to continue. These humanitarian ceasefires have thus far not been renewed. Against the foregoing background of deepening international concern, renewed efforts to launch an effective peace process and internal grass-roots peace initiatives, the civil war continues. That state of affairs not only gives rise to ongoing and additional humanitarian needs, but also tends to place limits on both the scope and level of humanitarian response and on efforts to meet those needs.

17. Tragic incidents in which humanitarian workers were victims during the reporting period highlight the considerable risks of operating in such a dangerous environment of armed conflict. In December 1999, two employees of the NGO Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International were killed and two were taken hostage (later released) while travelling by road between Bentiu and Mayom in the Upper Nile region. At around the same time, eight church aid workers were killed by the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in East Equatoria. In February 2000, a United Nations aircraft with four people on board was taken hostage for 10 days at Old Fanjak in Upper Nile. In August 2000, the Organization suspended humanitarian air operations throughout the Sudan, following the aerial bombardment of United Nations aircraft and facilities on the ground at Mapel in the Lakes region. In December 2000, two NGO humanitarian workers were ambushed and killed in East Equatoria. In March 2001, four NGO humanitarian workers from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) were detained by a militia leader and then questioned by the Government before eventually being released. Also in March 2001, two humanitarian workers involved with the World Health Organization (WHO) in the poliomyelitis campaign were killed in an attack on a village in Upper Nile. In May 2001, a pilot with the International Committee of the Red Cross, on a scheduled authorized flight, was killed by ground fire in East Equatoria.

18. These incidents are among the most serious ones suffered during the reporting period. There have been many others, making the Sudan one of the most dangerous operating environments for relief workers. It remains of the utmost concern to the United Nations that in none of the most serious cases have any persons been brought to justice.

C. Access

19. Negotiations on humanitarian access with the Government, SPLM/A and other groups in opposition to the Government constitute a core activity for the Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, supported by the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinators in Khartoum and Nairobi. Such negotiations are also a core element of the work of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan and for TCHA. OCHA-Sudan assists all parties with these negotiations.

20. Under TCHA auspices, both the Government and SPLM/A have endorsed the principle of unimpeded access to beneficiaries. Notwithstanding this commitment, limitations on access have continued to be experienced throughout the reporting period, including in areas of East Equatoria, Upper Nile, Bahr al-Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains. In particular, flight access continued to be denied on a regular basis for flights into areas of East Equatoria and Upper Nile and, more recently, Bahr al-Ghazal. To some extent it has been possible to reach these flight-denied locations by other means, but at added cost and inconvenience.

21. Efforts by the United Nations over the course of the reporting period to achieve cross-line road, river and rail deliveries of relief supplies, including under the auspices of TCHA, have so far come to nothing. Insecurity along the river and rail corridors and the presence of landmines on roads are among the major constraints to the achievement of cross-line movement,

which, among other things, could ease the prohibitive costs of deliveries by air.

22. Similarly, United Nations efforts to launch an integrated programme of relief and rehabilitation in the Nuba Mountains have stalled on the question of the corridors of air access to the rebel-controlled areas. The Government maintains that this must be effected via the airport at El Obeid, while SPLM insists on direct access from the United Nations/OLS operational base at Lokichoggio in northern Kenya. The United Nations has, however, managed to achieve, in consultation with both parties and on a case-by-case basis, emergency access on six occasions through El Obeid for assessment purposes and for the nationwide poliomyelitis vaccination campaign. Nonetheless, since April 2001, the vaccination campaign has been stalled owing to inability to negotiate access with the parties.

23. OCHA-Sudan facilitated the long-running negotiations between SPLM/A and the international NGO community on a proposed memorandum of understanding between SPLM/A and the NGOs, with that particular issue being resolved during the course of 2000. The memorandum of understanding is an SPLM/A mechanism to play a larger role in regulating the activities of international NGOs in SPLM-held areas. Further negotiations on fee-for-service arrangements between the same parties, which began in late 2000, are ongoing.

24. International humanitarian operations in the Sudan, including OLS, are bolstered by United Nations security support structures in both northern and southern sectors, based in Khartoum and Lokichoggio, respectively. The Security Protocol (see paras. 14 and 15 above) agreed to under the auspices of TCHA seeks to govern the movement and coverage of United Nations security activities, which are aimed at the safety and welfare of humanitarian workers.

25. These security structures continue to prove their effectiveness with assessments of locations for humanitarian activities, timely advice and direction on areas which are considered not safe for such activities, relocations of humanitarian workers from danger zones, hostage negotiations and regular security briefings.

D. Internally displaced persons

26. The enduring phenomenon of internal displacement in the Sudan, both for war-related reasons and from natural disasters such as drought and floods, continues to pose a formidable challenge. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners remain strongly committed to assisting an estimated 4 million internally displaced persons countrywide and to facilitating longer-term solutions in the current context of endemic conflict. Internally displaced persons are particularly concentrated in the Khartoum area, where the United Nations, in collaboration with the Government, is carrying out a major resettlement programme.

27. At the November 2000 meeting of TCHA in Geneva, both the Government and SPLM/A underlined their commitment to the freedom of movement of all Sudanese within the territory of the State of the Sudan. Both parties urged the international humanitarian community to devote more attention to assisting the resolution of chronic problems arising from internal displacement. All three parties — the Government, SPLM/A and the United Nations — agreed on the particular importance of assisting, where possible, the processes of voluntary and spontaneous return of internally displaced persons.

28. During the reporting period, further major displacement occurred in various parts of the country, for example the Upper Nile/Jonglei region, as a result of conflict and drought, Bahr al-Ghazal and East Equatoria, as a result of conflict, and western and eastern Sudan, as a result of drought. Estimates of the total number displaced over the last two years are in excess of 100,000 and far exceed the numbers of reported spontaneous returns that have taken place, estimated at 25,000 persons. Other population movements owing to economic pressures on areas of origin remain erratic but noticeable.

29. A United Nations comprehensive strategy for dealing with the question of internally displaced persons in the Sudan features surveys and profiling of such persons; model projects for resettlement, integration, and return to places of origin; capacity-building of Government and administration; and the establishment and development of a database. The United Nations also continues to assist the relevant authorities in the Sudan and other humanitarian actors in respect of acute emergency situations of displacement which arise on a regular basis.

E. Non-governmental organizations

30. Since July 1999 international NGOs based in Khartoum have continued working in all of the emergency-affected regions controlled by the Government, with the exception of Blue Nile, where international humanitarian access has not been permitted. The number of active and registered international NGOs working out of Khartoum increased to 28 during the reporting period, several of whom were key implementing partners for WFP, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies for programmes involving United Nations inputs such as food, agricultural items, water supply, sanitation and health and nutrition. International NGOs were also key to humanitarian responses to the emergency in Unity State, the drought in western Sudan and the recent emergency involving internally displaced persons in south Darfur arising from the SPLM/A offensive in Bahr al-Ghazal.

31. The OLS southern sector consortium, composed of over 40 NGOs and five United Nations agencies, continued to provide humanitarian assistance to areas affected by the conflict and insecurity in rebel-held areas. Assistance provided to these areas ranged from emergency aid to sustainable interventions in the context of peace-building and peace dividends to populations in areas that have demonstrated consistent stability. Security coverage was provided to over 500 humanitarian workers throughout this period by the United Nations security officers, supported by round-the-clock radio communications cover from the United Nations/OLS forward operational and logistics base in Lokichoggio.

32. Because of the increased security capacity of the United Nations and improved security coordination with the Organization during the reporting period, international NGOs enjoyed a higher level of security coverage and were assisted by the United Nations in several cases where the safety and security of international NGO personnel were at stake. Similarly, overall humanitarian coordination between the United Nations and international NGOs in the northern sector improved with the evolution of the Humanitarian Aid Forum in Khartoum as an appropriate coordination and information-sharing mechanism.

33. Programme coordination as well as strategic coordination among humanitarian actors in rebel-held areas of the Sudan continued to improve. The United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal process offered opportunities to partner organizations to be equally represented through this planning and strategic process led by the United Nations humanitarian coordination system. Forward planning for southern sector humanitarian action continued to be hampered by unpredictable access denials and insecurity in areas under rebel control, allowing fewer possibilities for wider sustainable interventions in such areas.

34. Liaison with OCHA, in Khartoum, Nairobi and the field, continued to prove useful both to international NGOs and the United Nations, particularly for addressing access and humanitarian environment issues such as mobile radio communications. However, there still remained room for progress in the area of working with national and local bureaucracies, which continued to suffer from inadequate internal communications and capacity, creating operational stumbling blocks to varying degrees for the international NGO community. Additionally, burdensome administrative requirements imposed by both the Government of the Sudan and SPLM/A for travel permits and similar documents continue to complicate relief operations.

35. The international NGO Forum in Khartoum continued its monthly meetings during the reporting period. A number of issues that have arisen over the period call for better communication and closer working relationships and coordination between international NGOs working in northern and southern sectors of the Sudan.

F. Relief food assistance

36. Food insecurity, increasingly fragile coping mechanisms and poor health have over the years become the norm for several million Sudanese civilians, owing to the complex inter-action of contributing factors. Prolonged civil war and related insecurity has given rise to continuing population displacement, disruption of agriculture, destruction of assets through raiding and looting and restricted access to markets. Agricultural and livestock production has been further affected by recurrent drought and floods and by pest attacks on crops and disease in livestock. While local peace initiatives brought together previously warring peoples into reconciliation, new enmities continued to flare up elsewhere.

37. Under these volatile security conditions, WFP met the food aid needs of the war and drought-affected population through the continuation of emergency operations. WFP has, namely, developed an emergency and logistics capability for prompt assistance, which promotes household food security and strengthens existing coping mechanisms. WFP emergency operations from 15 July 1999 to 15 July 2001 have helped to save lives, arrest the deterioration of the nutritional status of targeted populations, and stabilizing the food security situation in the most severely affected areas. During the above-mentioned period, a total of 216,334 tons of assorted food and related commodities have been provided to 2.6 million people. Females account for 53 per cent of the beneficiaries, the majority of whom were mothers and children. In areas of relative stability, WFP has sought to address basic social needs, with an emphasis on improving the lives of women and children in rural areas and internally displaced persons camps.

38. In 1998, malnutrition rates were exceptionally high in the Sudan, particularly in most parts of the Bahr al-Ghazal region, where they reached 45 per cent. These rates declined to less than 9 per cent in most of that region during 1999 and in early 2000 as a result of relief food aid. Unfortunately, by mid-2000, the rate began to increase again, particularly in Bahr al-Ghazal for areas outside the Government-controlled towns. The enforced withdrawal of a large number of NGOs as implementing partners was a contributing factor to this state of affairs. In many areas, insecurity combined with crop failure for both planting seasons have also caused a decline in nutritional standards.

39. Over the last two years, WFP has begun to move gradually and partly from general food distribution towards selective feeding programmes targeted at and controlled by women and girls. Emergency school feeding activities were carried out in transitional zones, as well as in internally displaced persons camps in conflict areas. In addition, WFP provided food aid through national and international NGOs. Regular joint needs assessments, registration, verification of beneficiary figures and distribution monitoring are undertaken with NGOs, humanitarian counterparts and other United Nations agencies. Food aid is also provided with and through relief committees.

G. Non-food assistance

Household food security

40. In the household food security (HFS) sector, the focus over the course of the reporting period continued to be on agriculture, livestock and fisheries and on efforts to build a measure of sustainability in the production and consumption of food. A chronic shortage of funds notwithstanding, UNICEF and later the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have led these efforts, supported where appropriate by WFP. In 2000, FAO joined hands with UNICEF in the implementation of the ongoing HFS project in the war-affected zones in southern Sudan. Overlap of interventions and activities included seeds and tools, livestock and fisheries. At the end of 2000, an agreement was reached with UNICEF on the handover of the HFS sector to FAO. The following activities took place in the course of the year:

- UNICEF and FAO assisted communities with agricultural activities by distributing 700 tons of seed, 22 tons of hand tools for cultivation and 12 tons of fishing equipment;
- UNICEF also assisted fishing communities with fishing hooks and twine and helped with the establishment of nine pilot fisheries associations;
- Seventy-five farmers and trainers were trained in the establishment and running of home gardens;
- Ox-plough training took place in Rumbek, which has significantly increased yields. Two hundred seven ox-ploughs were distributed;
- One thousand tons of seeds that would have been lost owing to surplus and lack of storage capacity were salvaged with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development;
- In 2000, 435,441 livestock vaccinations were completed, significantly less than in 1999. The lower numbers were due to the withdrawal of NGOs over the issue of the memorandum of understanding;
- Outbreak reporting procedures were improved during the year and all reported outbreaks of rinderpest were investigated and found to be false.

41. During 2001, FAO progressively took over from UNICEF HFS activities for both northern and southern sectors of the Sudan humanitarian programme: the agricultural component in January; the livestock component in June; and the fisheries component in July. This includes the Nuba Mountains, where FAO has been designated the lead agency in food security together with WFP, and where some quantities of seeds and tools have been provided on an emergency basis. Seeds and tools have also been provided to other parts of the Sudan on a similar basis, including areas in the south and in the western areas of Darfur and Kordofan.

42. FAO currently implements 14 humanitarian projects worth US$ 4.2 million for the benefit of more than 300,000 war and drought-affected households in both the southern and northern sectors of the humanitarian programme. FAO is also actively involved in assisting current efforts to protect livestock herds from the threat of rinderpest.

Nutrition and health

43. Since mid-December 2000, a sharp rise in overall malnutrition rates was observed, moving from the 10-15 per cent range observed for most locations since 1999 to 15-30 per cent in both Government and non-Government-held areas. The most affected areas are Unity State (30 per cent), Bahr al-Ghazal (28 per cent), Upper Nile and Jonglei (21 per cent), Darfur (21.6 per cent) and Kordofan (21 per cent). Rates have been difficult to assess in East Equatoria owing to insecurity. In internally displaced persons camps, where food aid intervention was inadequate because of breaks in the food pipeline, malnutrition rates exceeded 15 per cent. Severe malnutrition ranged from 2.7 per cent in Red Sea State and north Darfur to over 4.7 per cent in Unity State.

44. The situation is critical and can be attributed to a combination of escalating conflict with consequent displacement, and debilitating drought coinciding with seasonal hunger gaps and poor medical care. Interruptions to food aid pipelines have also had adverse effects in the most vulnerable circumstances. The outlook in respect of nutrition levels therefore remains fragile, with a possible further deterioration in areas not accessible to international humanitarian aid. Intensive and higher food needs countrywide will therefore be required until the end of 2001. WFP will intensify its support to feeding centres managed by specialized NGOs and partners.

45. Between September and November 1999, when northern Sudan was heavily flooded, over 6,000 cases of acute gastro-enteritis were reported in 14 northern states. UNICEF pre-positioned essential drugs and other supplies to treat 1.2 million cases of different diseases. At around the same time the Sudan experienced a sharp shortfall in intravenous fluids, UNICEF airlifted 66,000 bottles to manage 11,000 cases of watery diarrhoea.

46. In the wake of the Ethiopian and Eritrean war in May 2000, when the flight of 86,000 persons into Kassala created an emergency crisis, UNICEF provided plastic sheeting, insecticide-treated bed nets and nutrition inputs to cover at least 20,000 people. UNICEF also supported the immunization of 4,680 children against measles and the vaccination of 34,000 at risk against meningitis. Moreover, it provided essential drugs for NGOs and the State Ministry of Health of Kassala, enabling them to manage 700,000 clinical cases of diseases in 12 months. Other much-needed environmental supplies made it possible to avert an outbreak of cholera and relapsing fever. In July and August 2000, over 70,000 civilians, caught in the crossfire of warring factions in Unity State, converged upon Bentiu and Rubkona for safety. UNICEF immunized over 5,000 children (from 6 months to 12 years of age) against measles and provided 3 tons of essential drugs, UNIMIX, high-calorie compact food, bed nets, insecticides and disinfectants.

47. During the first part of 2001, UNICEF supported an emergency measles campaign in three drought-affected northern states, targeting 512,000 children between the ages of 9 and 59 months and an accelerated campaign in seven southern states, targeting 1.8 million persons. Over the same period, for emergency preparedness in the drought-affected northern states, UNICEF pre-positioned enough essential drugs and nutrition supplies to benefit 1.4 million persons for nine months. A maternal and neo-natal tetanus campaign vaccinated 282,000 women in four states in the north. In addition, from early June 2001, more than 30,000 persons were displaced owing to hostilities in Bahr al-Ghazal. UNICEF, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and NGOs, provided 2 tons of essential drugs, 600 cartons of BP5 (high-energy compact food), 100 tons of UNIMIX and 18,000 insecticide-treated bed nets. An

emergency measles campaign was conducted among 2,300 children in a three-week period.

48. Periodic epidemics of meningitis continue to demand close attention. By the end of June 2000 all states in Government-controlled areas had reported 5,578 cases and 433 deaths. For 2001, the disease appeared first in Bahr al-Jabal state, which reported 3,155 cases with 223 deaths. During the same period, other states reported approaching the epidemic threshold of 5-10 cases per 100,000 population. The amount of vaccines distributed was 2,463,160 doses.

49. In the continuing campaign to eradicate poliomyelitis, the Government of the Sudan, rebel authorities, WHO, UNICEF and NGOs have vaccinated over 6 million children in each round since July 1999. For the first time, this included the rebel-controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains, although for the most recent round, in March 2001, the Government did not allow access on time. Vitamin A supplement was applied twice a year to children between the ages of 6 to 59 months in order to reduce child mortality. With the assistance of WHO, the Government has strengthened its surveillance system to end circulation of the poliomyelitis virus by late 2002.

50. In the rebel-held areas, OLS agencies reported administering the following vaccines in 2000: 416,800 tetanus toxoid (TT); 584,450 measles; 375,800 bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG); 610,610 diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus toxoid (DPT); 635,900 poliomyelitis; 30,500 meningitis. A special campaign in Upper Nile reached 28,000 children with measles vaccinations. Also in rebel areas, UNICEF provided an average of 130 essential drug kits monthly through NGO partners to combat illness. A new HIV/AIDS awareness initiative was introduced, increasing general awareness. UNICEF and WHO also investigated 34 outbreak reports in rebel-held locations during 2000 and responded with emergency supplies and technical assistance.

Water and environmental sanitation

51. Water and environmental sanitation interventions by UNICEF in the war and drought-affected areas during the reporting period benefited a total of approximately 750,000 persons, including school children. This assistance was delivered through the construction and rehabilitation of water schemes and development of water sources, the construction of household and school latrines and through health and hygiene education campaigns. In particular, guinea worm eradication activities were supported by provision of safe drinking water for the endemic villages, filter materials, medical kits, logistics, surveillance and training. These interventions contributed to a reduction in the number of reported cases from 100,940 in 1996 to 54,019 in 2000.

52. UNICEF, with the Government of the Sudan, constructed a new water plant for Malakal to benefit over 70,000 persons and for Bentiu to benefit 30,000 persons and installed or improved 260 hand pumps in Wau, Raga, Aweil, Juba and South Kordofan to benefit 65,000 persons. In addition, 1,000 hand pumps were rehabilitated to benefit 250,000 persons and 44 water yards in the transitional zone and Kordofan were rehabilitated to benefit 100,000 persons. In Government-controlled areas, approximately 4,000 household latrines and 60 school latrines were constructed in, inter alia, Juba, Wau, Raga, Malakal, Abyei, Meiram and internally displaced persons camps in transitional zones to benefit approximately 58,000 persons. Village health committees and hand pump mechanics were to take responsibility for sustaining the sources and delivering services to their communities.

53. In rebel-held locations in southern Sudan, UNICEF and OLS agencies created 631 new water sources and rehabilitated 555 existing ones. In addition, 919 Sudanese were trained in various aspects of the care of water sources. They are used as village-level caretakers and ensure the continued provision of quality water sources under the supervision of OLS agencies. In rebel-held areas, hygiene and sanitation training took place, with at least 3,000 families building their own latrines as a result during 2000. Additional latrines were supported through the work of OLS agencies.

Emergency education

54. UNICEF support for emergency education in the Government-controlled areas achieved some progress during the reporting period. In the war-affected areas, 10 classrooms were reconstructed with permanent materials and 99 others were rehabilitated using semi-permanent materials, benefiting at least 6,540 pupils. Three hundred sixty benches and desks were provided for nine basic schools in Equatoria to seat 1,800 children. Also, school uniforms and plastic shoes were provided to 1,000 internally displaced girls in the war-

affected areas as incentives for girls to participate in schooling and to comply with dress codes. Birth certificates were provided to 1,000 displaced school children in southern Kordofan and southern Darfur states. Five hundred fifty school kits were provided to meet the needs of 5,000 internally displaced children and over 500 teachers were trained in the three cycles of the new curriculum to expose them to new contents and improved teaching methods. Support was further given to the National Curriculum Development Centre to develop guidelines for the Peace Education Programme in Basic Schools in the Sudan.

55. Southern sector locations similarly report progress with continued coordination of teacher training and the provision of educational supplies. In particular, UNICEF was instrumental in increasing the number of implementing NGOs in the under-served area of Bahr al-Ghazal. UNICEF also supported a number of new teacher training initiatives and brought together education coordinators from all over southern Sudan to discuss education in the region.

56. A major breakthrough in establishing baseline information on education took place in 1999, with the advent of the School Baseline Assessment project. Some 500 schools were assessed and the information collected is to be used for future planning. UNICEF also provided 1,700 schools with school materials, reaching over 300,000 children, and 20,000 children in emergency situations benefited from emergency school kits. Innovations such as the Distance Education Programme to combat low training levels in teachers and the Life Skills Programme to target hard-to-reach children and create "second chance" opportunities for children in special circumstances were also developed.

Rights, child protection and peace-building

57. In 1999, UNICEF began to mainstream rights, child protection, gender and peace-building across the work of all its programmes. In practice, this has resulted in the water and sanitation programme addressing the role of water availability as a factor in producing inter-community tension and ensuring service is provided in such a way as to deal with this matter. Programming for children in need of special protection measures focused on addressing child abduction by militia forces and providing support to adults and children escaping from the Ugandan armed opposition group, the Lord's Resistance Army. In 1999, UNICEF began to support the Committee for the Eradication of the Abduction of Women and Children, which had been established at the initiative of the Government of the Sudan. In collaboration with Save the Children-UK, 670 abducted women and children were reunified with their families in southern and western Sudan. In mid-2001, another 270 were in transit or foster care pending reunification. Progress on identifying abducted women and children was slow, and, after May 2000, lack of official permission and insecurity prevented further cross-line reunification. New abductions took place in 2000 and 2001.

58. Between 1999 and the middle of 2001, over 300 escaping members of the Lord's Resistance Army passed through a UNICEF-supported transit care system established with the Government and, latterly, the International Organization for Migration and Save the Children-UK, to facilitate return to Uganda. Most escaped around Juba and were handed over to child protection agencies by the Sudanese military, to be given care and protection in Juba and Khartoum pending being flown to Uganda. The numbers of persons escaping appeared to be increasing in mid-2001.

59. UNICEF supported a women-led peace initiative seeking to promote reconciliation between two sections of the Nuer community in Upper Nile. A series of training workshops were organized around this process, including on the use of radio for peace-building. Other conflict-resolution initiatives supported included meetings between communities in south Kordofan and, in December 2000, a week of peace activities in schools in Wau. Peace-building focal points were supported in five Sudanese universities. Meanwhile, UNICEF and a number of NGOs, among them the national NGO, Child Rights Watch, organized workshops on the rights of the child and child protection for the military, police, journalists and judiciary.

60. In February 2001, years of discussion and advocacy culminated in the single largest airlift of demobilized child soldiers in the history of UNICEF. SPLM/A, holding to agreements made with UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy in 2000, demobilized many of the children in its ranks and handed them over to the Fund. UNICEF moved the children out of conflict areas to the relative security of Rumbek County. Mobilizing support from donors and interested agencies, UNICEF coordinated the establishment of transit centres and the provision of

basic services to the children while they waited tracing and reunification with their home communities. Services include water and sanitation, provision of food, health care, recreational activities, life skills training and, most importantly, education.

61. Despite initial difficulties, UNICEF has pressed forward with plans to reunify the children with families and by mid-July was in the final stages of preparation. An essential part of this process is the preparation of the home communities for the return of the children. This includes advocacy, mobilization and the provision of services where necessary. Bolstering the educational structures in the children's home areas has been a primary concern and one which UNICEF continues to address. The reunification was set to begin in late July and early August 2001.

62. In the rebel-held locations of southern Sudan, UNICEF developed a human rights training manual and the Rights Awareness Teams presented 12 workshops to 600 people. UNICEF trained SPLA officers in basic human rights and supported 32 landmine awareness workshops, reaching 4,500 people with safety messages. Southern Sudanese lawyers were also introduced to international standards of juvenile justice. The peace-building section trained 70 Sudanese trainers in the Future Search methodology, which explores common ground for community action, and supported the People-to-People Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Liliir, organized by the New Sudan Council of Churches.

H. Assistance to refugees

63. During the reporting period, 147,302 Eritrean and 11,889 Ethiopian camp-based refugees received basic material and protection assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). An estimated 232,000 urban refugees received limited material assistance and are still covered by the Office's protection mandate. The only durable solution option for this group would be repatriation to their countries of origin. Most of these refugees are Eritreans, living mainly in Khartoum, Kassala, Gedaref and Port Sudan. The rest are Ethiopians, Chadians, Ugandans and others.

64. Following consultations between UNHCR and the Governments of the Sudan and Eritrea, a Tripartite Agreement was signed in Geneva on 7 April 2000 between the State of Eritrea, the Republic of the Sudan and UNHCR. The Agreement established, among other things, the main legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of 160,000 Eritrean refugees from the Sudan and their integration in Eritrea. In accordance with the Agreement, and in order to elaborate further on an operational framework, a Tripartite Repatriation Commission was convened in Asmara, Eritrea, at the end of April 2000. Another agreement was signed underlining the principles governing the actual repatriation operation.

65. At the end of the registration exercise in May 2000, a total of 9,222 individuals had been registered for voluntary repatriation. Arrangements and plans had been finalized to move the first group of returnees towards the end of May, when war suddenly broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia, resulting in some 95,000 Eritrean nationals fleeing to the Sudan in search of refuge. As a result, the Eritrean repatriation process was suspended pending the normalization of the political situation in Eritrea. After the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia abated, UNHCR, together with the Eritrean Government, which provided its own trucks, assisted some 25,000 individuals from the new influx of Eritreans to repatriate to Eritrea in an organized manner.

66. During the first half of 2001, UNHCR in the Sudan stepped up the promotion of voluntary repatriation of all Eritrean refugees, which could not take place in 2000 owing to the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. UNHCR plans to assist 62,000 Eritrean refugees, comprising the residual new caseload of 27,000 and some 35,000 from the old caseload who had expressed their willingness to return home voluntarily. In order to facilitate this objective, a Tripartite Meeting, comprising the Governments of the Sudan and Eritrea and UNHCR, was held in Khartoum from 21 to 23 April 2001, and formulated the operational strategy for a full-scale repatriation to Eritrea covering the years 2001 and 2002. By mid-June 2001, a total of 15,000 Eritrean refugees had already been repatriated.

67. The implementation of the Cessation Clause for the pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees, which came into effect in March 2000, was finalized in the Sudan by the end of March 2001. The delay was caused by the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia in May 2000. The emergency operation was normalized by August 2000 and UNHCR embarked on the repatriation

of those pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees who had registered for voluntary repatriation to Ethiopia. By the end of March 2001, a total of 12,000 pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees had been assisted to repatriate voluntarily, while those with compelling reasons not to repatriate were screened jointly by UNHCR and the Sudan Commissioner of Refugees. Of the 3,000 applicants who were interviewed, the screening exercise resulted in some 500 families being assessed as having compelling reasons to remain in the Sudan and will continue to benefit from the protection and assistance of UNHCR. The rest of the applicants screened, who were found not to have compelling reasons but who wished to remain in the Sudan, were advised to regularize their status with the authorities.

68. Of the estimated 8,547 Ugandan refugees living in southern Sudan, UNHCR assisted 277 to repatriate during 2000. This caseload continued to be provided with international protection assistance during the reporting period.

69. In 2000, UNHCR successfully finalized the repatriation of 266 Congolese refugees in Juba. These individuals were part of the remaining group of 318 Congolese women and children in Juba who were of concern to UNHCR. The remaining 52 Congolese refugees could not be accounted for and that concluded the involvement of UNHCR for this caseload.

70. The caseload of 43 individuals of Somali origin residing in the Fau 5 camp, together with Eritrean refugees, received protection, care and maintenance from 1995 to the present. The Somali refugees had requested resettlement to a third country, but after the interviews, most of them did not meet the requirements. The final durable solution for this caseload remains repatriation to Somalia.

IV. Action taken by Member States

71. International funding for the United Nations humanitarian operations in the Sudan is particularly important since these operations remain the principal means by which hundreds of thousands of civilians meet their basic needs in an overwhelming situation of armed conflict. To support its humanitarian, relief and rehabilitation needs in the Sudan, the United Nations issued Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals for each of the three calendar years covered by the period of the present report, that is, 1999, 2000 and 2001. For the current 2001 Appeal, four revisions had been issued by mid-July 2001 to cover drought in western Sudan, the demobilization of child soldiers, preventive measures against rinderpest disease in livestock and the latest crisis of conflict-related internal displacement in Bahr al-Ghazal and Darfur.

72. To mid-July 2001, funds and supplies amounting to just under $148 million (about 60 per cent of the total amount requested) had been received and/or committed in response to the 2001 Appeal, with the food sector funded at 75 per cent and the non-food sector at 30 per cent. Additional funding support is still urgently required if the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable communities, including the substantial numbers of internally displaced persons, are to be met.

73. Comprehensive information on funding for the Sudan humanitarian programme, including OLS, covering contributions by specific donors, is available on the web site http://www.reliefweb.int.

V. Concluding observations

74. For more than four decades, the Sudanese people have had to bear the brunt of the longest running civil war in Africa. The war, combined with periodic droughts and floods, has exacerbated the plight of already fragile communities. The humanitarian programme for the Sudan was designed primarily to counter the adverse effects of the war on the most vulnerable and will undoubtedly be necessary as long as the conflict continues. Operation Lifeline Sudan, together with its humanitarian partners on the ground, continues to operate under particularly difficult circumstances, including lack of access, growing insecurity and ongoing displacement of populations.

75. Environmental and security conditions continue to deteriorate, with the prospects for malnutrition and vulnerability likely to increase towards the end of 2001. Humanitarian assistance is at best slowing the overall deterioration of the situation. In this context, only a negotiated and lasting peace settlement between the parties, supported by local and regional actors and the international community as a whole, can provide the fundamental solution. All peace efforts, local and international, must be actively pursued and encouraged by all relevant parties.

76. Short of a peace settlement and for the sake of the civilian population, the parties to the conflict must

work at reinstating humanitarian ceasefires. Those that were in effect from July 1998 to July 2000 contributed, however little, to containing armed confrontation.

77. Humanitarian action in the Sudan must strive to remain transparent, impartial, neutral and accountable. It is also paramount to ensure the respect by all signatories of the OLS agreements for unrestricted humanitarian access and to fulfil the trilateral agreements defining the conditions for the provision of relief aid in the Sudan, including the Beneficiary and Security Protocols reached within the framework of TCHA. Given the limited humanitarian access and volatile security conditions (especially in southern Sudan), all efforts must be continued to implement these accords fully.

78. In view of the situation in the Sudan, increased humanitarian access, safety and protection of civilians, adequate resources and guaranteed security for humanitarian workers remain the core conditions of the aid programme. It is especially important for the humanitarian action in critical areas of southern Sudan to benefit from an extension of the humanitarian space and to operate with minimal security guarantees.